

ACTION

PICTURE
LIBRARY

No. 26 1/3

EIRE VS

The background of the cover is a dramatic illustration of a submarine sinking. A large, dark submarine is tilted at a steep angle, with its conning tower and gun barrels visible. A smaller boat with a red roof is also tilted and appears to be sinking alongside it. Several people in yellow life jackets are shown floating in the churning water, some clinging to debris. The scene is set against a backdrop of a cloudy sky and dark, turbulent water.

SEA HUNT

Stand by for an onslaught of action-packed thrills

WAR PICTURE LIBRARY SPECIAL EXTRA

4 gripping stories in one 224-page bumper special 3/-

THE LIONHEARTS

He drove men ruthlessly in preparation for the day of battle – for it would only be the strong who survived.

CODE OF HONOUR

Only an officer's courage and leadership can earn him the respect of the men serving under him.

MISSION FOR HEROES

It was a task only the toughest could handle, yet it was an ordinary seaman who stood between the three VCs and failure.

DIRECT HIT

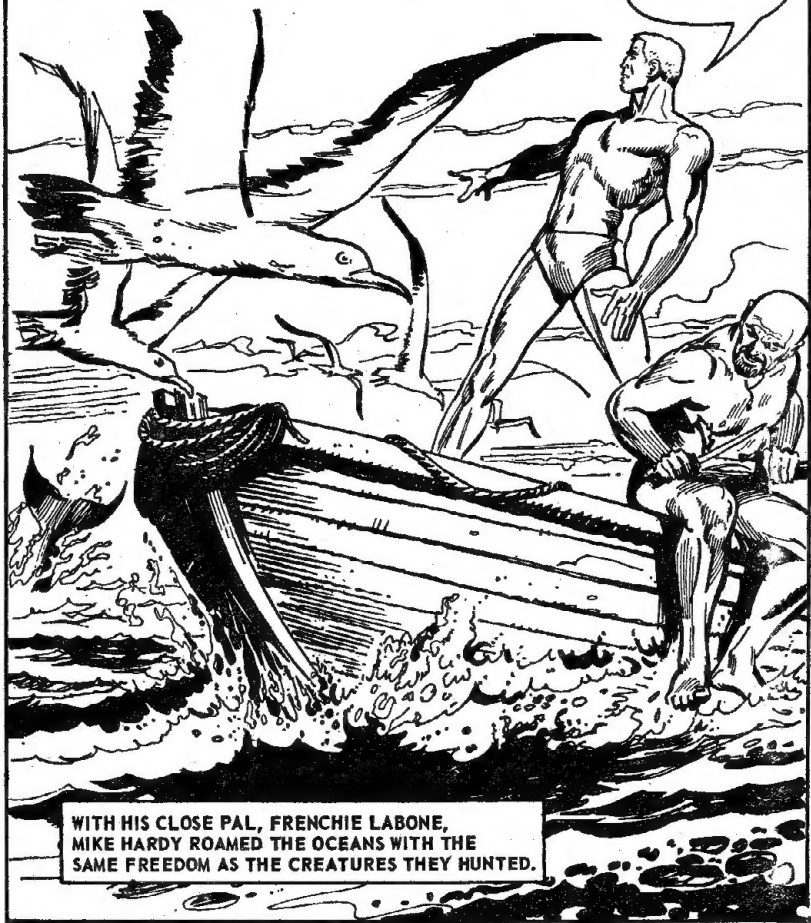
They flew together – each man drawing on the courage of the other – each wondering who would be first to break.

Don't miss it... it's on sale Friday August 21



SEA HUNT

THERE
THEY BLOW!



WITH HIS CLOSE PAL, FRENCHIE LABONE,
MIKE HARDY ROAMED THE OCEANS WITH THE
SAME FREEDOM AS THE CREATURES THEY HUNTED.

THEIR QUARRY WERE BELUGA WHALES, WEIGHING A MERE 800 POUNDS. BUT PROFESSOR LINND, WHO HAD HIRED THEM, WANTED THE BELUGAS TAKEN ALIVE ...

PICK UP SPEED - THEY'VE
WINDED US ! SIGNAL THE OTHER
LAUNCH TO CUT THEM OFF !

CONFOUND THE
FELLOW, HE MAKES IT
ALL SEEM LIKE SOME SORT
OF WILD WEST SHOW. IF
HE WASN'T SO GOOD
AT HIS JOB ...



MAYBE WE'LL GET
THAT BULL THIS TIME,
PROF. THERE'S A BEAUT.,
RIGHT IN FRONT OF
THE HERD.

YOU SURE ?
THEY ALL LOOK ALIKE
FROM HERE.

IF MIKE
SAYS THERE EES
A BULL, THERE IS
A BULL !





FRENCHIE GOT ASTRIDE THE WHALE - FOR A FEW VIOLENT SECONDS ...

I GOT HEEM !
YIPP-AI-YIIIEE !

BLUBBER-HEAD !
YOU COULDN'T RIDE A
ROCKING HORSE - NEVER
MIND A WHALE !

THE TWO MEN MADE IT SEEM LIKE A GAME,
BUT THEY WERE PLAYING WITH DEATH ..

IT HAS SLIPPED THE
NOOSE, PROFESSOR !

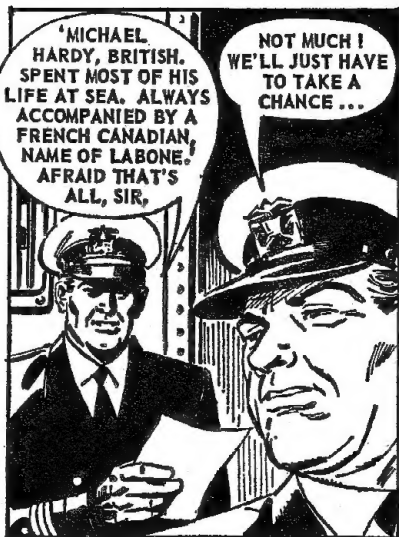
I'M NOT SO SURE !
HARDY MAY ACT THE FOOL,
BUT HE KNOWS EXACTLY
WHAT HE'S DOING !





OTHERS WERE WATCHING THAT EXTRAORDINARY WRESTLING MATCH - FROM A DISTANCE ...





THE STRUGGLE TO CAPTURE THE WHALE WAS NEARING ITS CLIMAX ...







THE AMERICANS ENTERTAINED WELL AND THE WHALERS HAD GOOD APPETITES. ONLY MIKE WAS UNEASY ...

SOMETHING SCREWY ABOUT ALL THIS! DON'T YOU THINK SO, FRENCHIE?

WHY WORRY ABOUT IT, MON AMI? THEES CHICKEN IS MUCH BETTER THAN WHALE MEAT, SO MAKE THE MOST OF IT!



I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU OVER MY SHIP, MISTER HARDY. GOT SOME GADGETS THAT'D INTEREST YOU ...

SURE, THANKS, COMMANDER ...

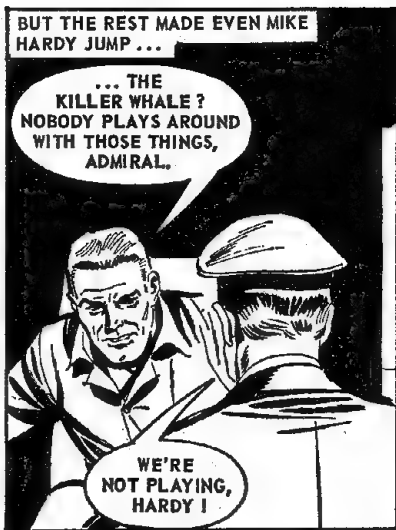


MIKE FOLLOWED THE COMMANDER DOWN A CORRIDOR, STEPPED THROUGH A DOORWAY - AND DREW UP IN SURPRISE.

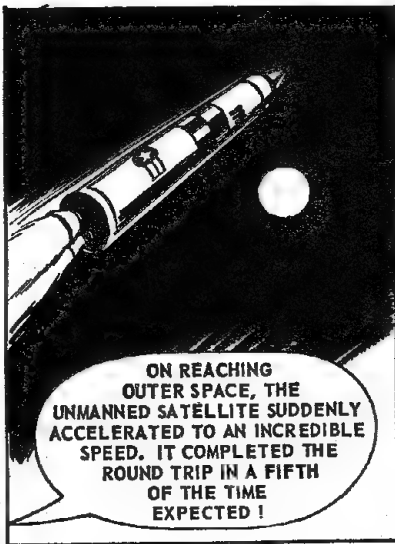
DON'T TELL ME THIS IS SOME OF YOUR CREW, COMMANDER? AN ADMIRAL AND TWO COMMANDERS?

I'M ADMIRAL TIERNEY, MISTER HARDY, BEEN WATCHING YOU ALL DAY. YOU KNOW YOUR WHALES, EH?



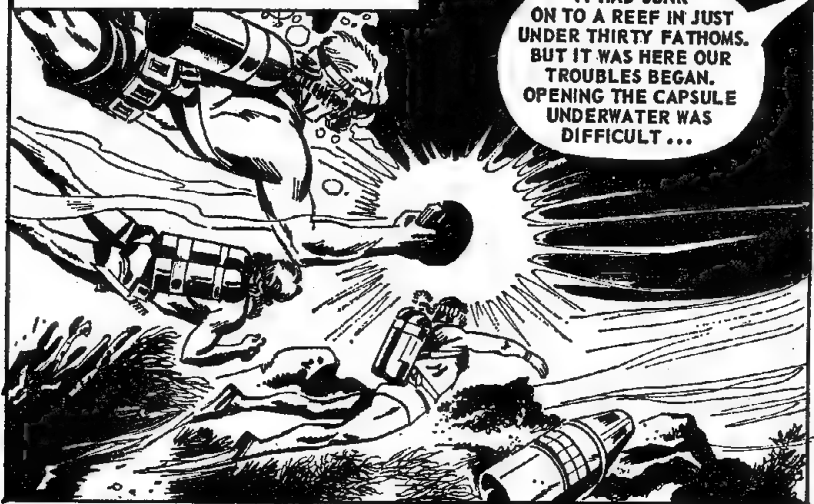


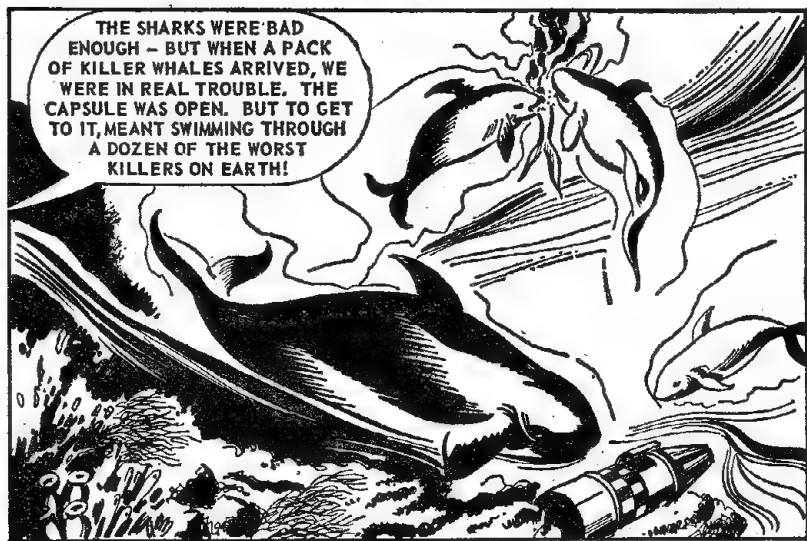
THE ROOM WAS DARKENED AND A CINE-PROJECTOR BEGAN TO HUM ...



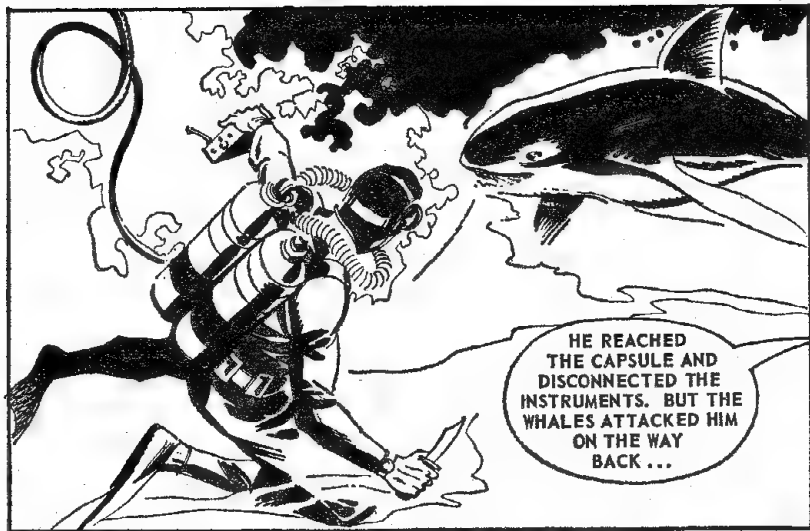


PUZZLED AND CURIOUS, MIKE WATCHED ...









HE REACHED
THE CAPSULE AND
DISCONNECTED THE
INSTRUMENTS. BUT THE
WHALES ATTACKED HIM
ON THE WAY
BACK ...

THE FILM ENDED ABRUPTLY - AND
MIKE LOOKED AT ONE OF THE
OFFICERS THERE - A LIEUTENANT
WITH ONE ARM ...

YOU WERE LUCKY
IT WASN'T YOUR LIFE,
LIEUTENANT. THEY'RE NOT
CALLED KILLER WHALES
FOR NOTHING I

FORTUNATELY, I
WAS ON A LIFELINE -
AND THEY DRAGGED ME
OUT. BUT I LOST
MY ARM ...



AND OF COURSE, THE WHALE ALSO SWALLOWED THE INSTRUMENT BOX WHEN IT TOOK OFF GRUBER'S ARM.

AND THAT'S WHERE I COME IN, EH? HAVE YOU ANY IDEA HOW MANY WHALES THERE ARE, COMMANDER?

IT'S NOT QUITE SO HOPELESS. WITH SPECIAL RADIO EQUIPMENT, WE CAN DETECT THE INSTRUMENT UP TO A RANGE OF FIFTY MILES.

THEN YOU DON'T NEED ME!



WE KNOW THE RUSSIANS ARE SEARCHING, TOO - USING THE SAME KIND OF DETECTOR EQUIPMENT. WE WANT YOU TO HELP THEM!

WELL, NOW I'VE HEARD EVERYTHING!



THEY'RE USING A WHALE-CATCHER WITH A CIVILIAN CREW, PRETENDING TO BE A MARINE RESEARCH TEAM. THEY'D JUMP AT SOMEBODY WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE, HARDY!



WE HAVE TO KNOW IF AND WHEN THEY FIND THAT INSTRUMENT. TO DO THAT, WE MUST HAVE SOMEBODY ON THEIR SHIP!

SUPPOSING I AGREE—THERE'S STILL THE PROBLEM OF FINDING THIS SHIP.

IT'S AT SAN FELINO RIGHT NOW—REFUELLING. WE COULD GET YOU THERE IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS...



IT WAS AN ASSIGNMENT RIGHT AFTER MIKE HARDY'S HEART. HE WAS BEING BRIEFED WHEN FRENCHIE CAME LOOKING FOR HIM.

LET ME HANDLE HIM, ADMIRAL. FRENCHIE IS A BIT TEMPERAMENTAL!

MIKE! THEY TELL US YOU TAKE SICK. I'M NOT LEAVING THIS TUB WITHOUT YOU!



MIKE TOLD FRENCHIE AS MUCH AS HE DARED, BUT IT DID NO GOOD...

IT IS BAD LUCK FOR SHIPMATES TO PART AT SEA. BETTER IF I GO WITH YOU.

YOU'RE AS STUBBORN AS AN OLD WALRUS, FRENCHIE. ALL RIGHT, I'LL TALK TO THE ADMIRAL ...

THE ADMIRAL WAS NOT TOO HAPPY AT FIRST, BUT THE COMMANDER SUPPORTED MIKE HARDY'S REQUEST...

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ONE OF THEM, SIR, MAYBE THE OTHER COULD GET A SIGNAL THROUGH.

OKAY, HARDY - TAKE YOUR BUDDY ALONG ...

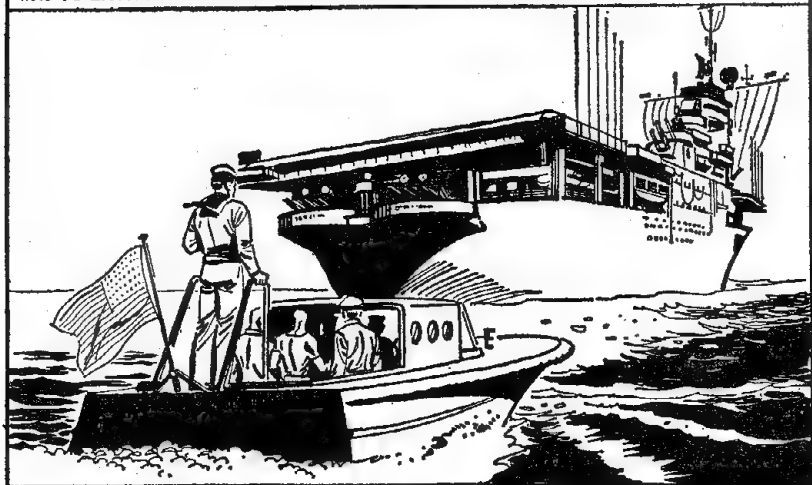
WHILE MIKE AND FRENCHIE SLEPT, THE DESTROYER RACED TO A RENDEZVOUS AT DAWN ...

THEES JOB THE AMERICANS WANT YOU TO DO - IT MUST BE VERY IMPORTANT TO GET ALL THEES V.I.P. TREATMENT, NON ?

COULD BE, FRENCHIE ! ANYWAY, THERE'S NO BACKING OUT NOW ...



COMMANDER RYDER ACCOMPANIED THEM TO THE HUGE AIRCRAFT CARRIER WHICH WAS TO LAUNCH THEM ON THE NEXT STAGE OF THEIR JOURNEY ...



ONCE ABOARD, NO TIME WAS LOST ...



THE TWO WHALE-HUNTERS WERE FITTED WITH PARACHUTES ...

MA FOI I
WHAT ARE WE AFTER ?
FLYING FEESH ?

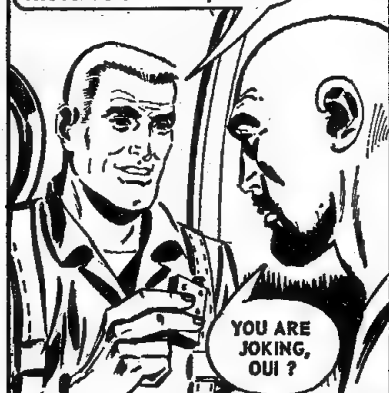
LOOK AFTER
THAT LITTLE BOX
I GAVE YOU, HARDY.
COULD BE THE ONLY
THING BETWEEN YOU
AND SIBERIA!

AS THEY HURTLIED ACROSS THE PACIFIC, MIKE TRIED TO EXPLAIN THEIR TASK
TO FRENCHIE ...

WE JUMP A FEW MILES
FROM SAN FELINO, WALK INTO
THE TOWN AND GET OURSELVES
HIRED AS CREW MEMBERS. THEN
WE HELP THE RUSSIANS FIND
THIS KILLER WHALE WITH
THE INSTRUMENTS IN
ITS GIZZARD!

IS THAT ALL ... ?

IF AND WHEN THE RUSSIANS DO GET A BEARING ON THIS WHALE, ALL I DO IS ACTIVATE THIS LITTLE GADGET. THE AMERICANS WILL COME HOMING IN AND PICK US UP! AN EASY THOUSAND DOLLARS, EH?



YOU ARE JOKING, OUI?

ANOTHER TEN MINUTES AND WE'LL BE OVER SAN FELINO. WHERE SHALL I DROP YOU - SEA OR LAND?

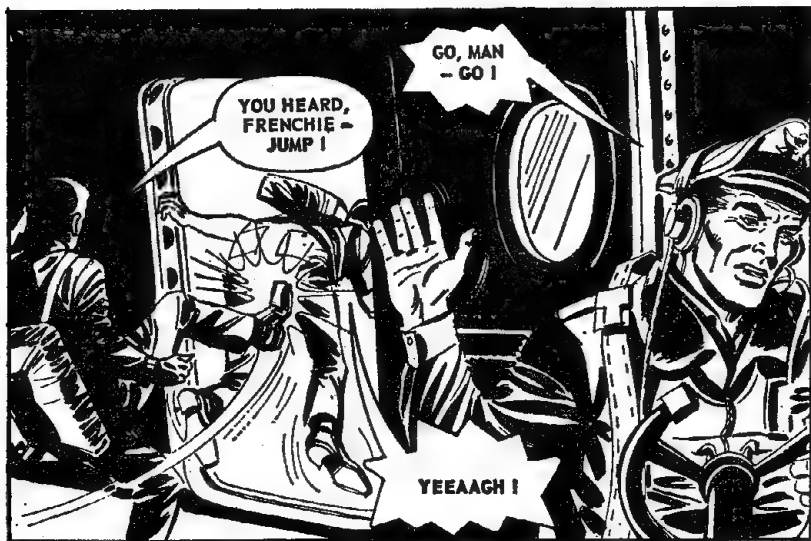
THE SEA WILL BE SOFTER. I'D HATE FRENCHIE TO BREAK HIS NECK!



ME, TOO!

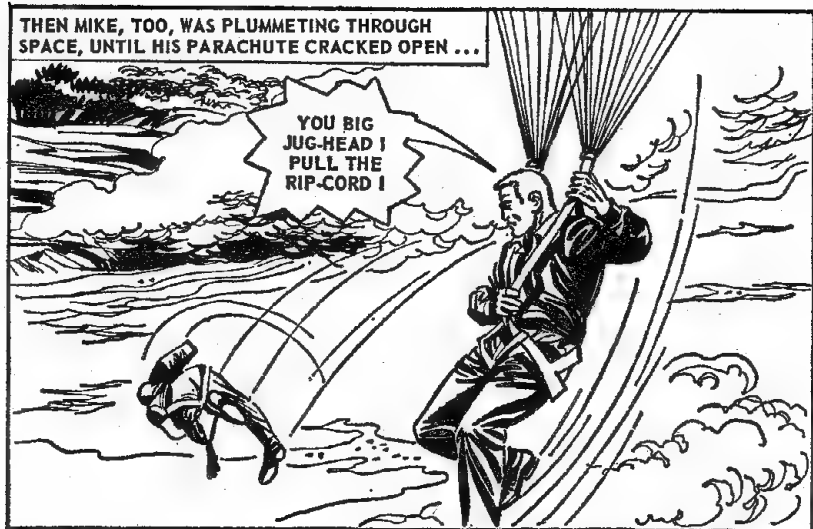
YOU HEARD, FRENCHIE - JUMP!

GO, MAN - GO!

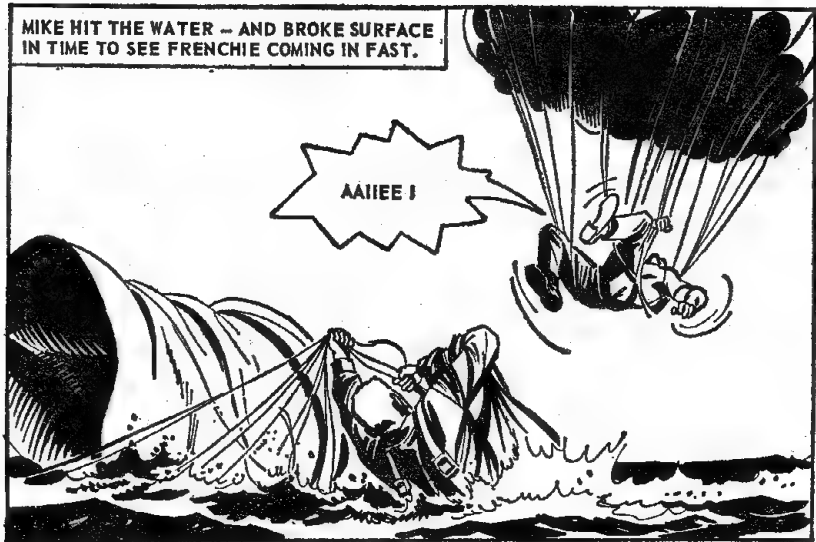


YEEAAGH!

THEN MIKE, TOO, WAS PLUMMETING THROUGH SPACE, UNTIL HIS PARACHUTE CRACKED OPEN ...



MIKE HIT THE WATER — AND BROKE SURFACE IN TIME TO SEE FRENCHIE COMING IN FAST.





THE PILOT STAYED LONG ENOUGH TO SEE THEM SAFELY ASHORE ...



SAN FELINO WAS LIKE A HUNDRED OTHER LITTLE TOWNS ALONG THE SOUTH AMERICAN COASTLINE. AT THE WOODEN JETTY A MODERN-LOOKING VESSEL WAS MOORED ...

BE GOOD TO FEEL A DECK UNDER ME AGAIN. MY FEET ARE KILLING ME !

THAT MUST BE THE RUSSIAN SHIP. WELL, LET'S GO JOIN UP !



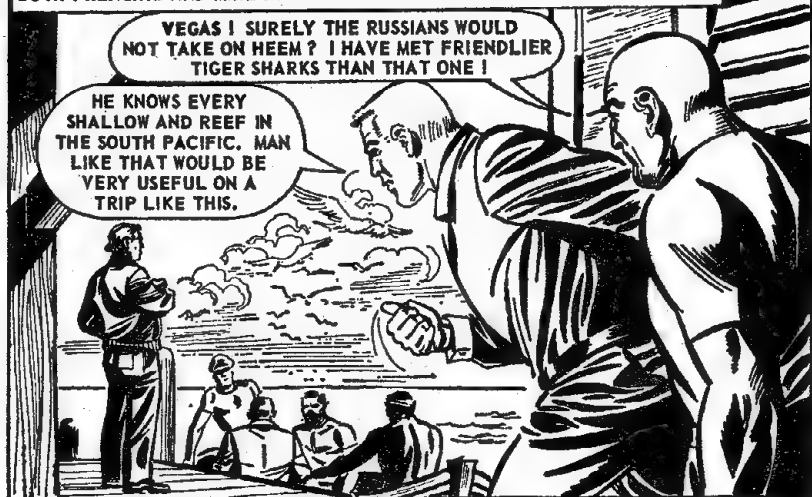
THEIR APPEARANCE DREW LITTLE ATTENTION IN SAN FELINO. SEAMEN WERE A COMMON SIGHT THERE ...

THOSE TWO WITH ZE RIFLES -- THEY DO NOT LOOK VERY FRIENDLY. AND WHY THEY CARRY GUNS ?

A GOOD QUESTION ! AND THAT LOOKS LIKE SOME MORE COMING ASHORE.

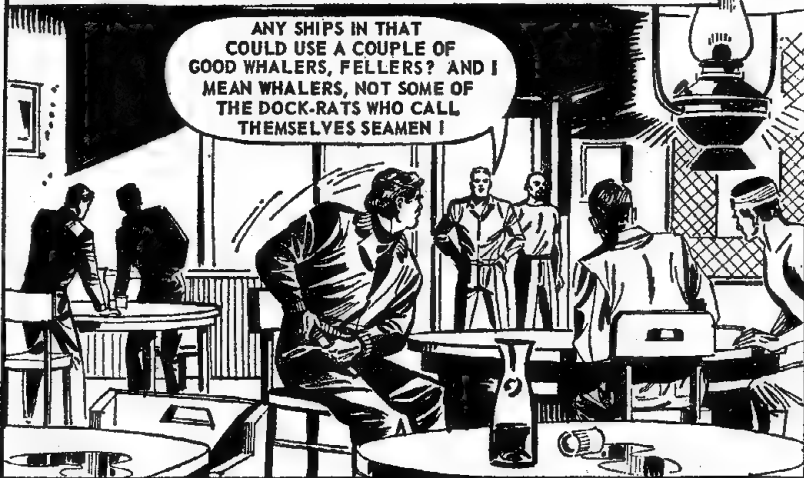


BOTH FRENCHIE AND MIKE RECOGNISED THE FIRST MAN ASHORE AT ONCE ...



THE MOMENT MIKE AND FRÉNCHE ENTERED THE SALOON, THE ATMOSPHERE BECAME TENSE, MIKE PUT HIS QUESTION SO THAT ALL COULD HEAR IT ...

ANY SHIPS IN THAT
COULD USE A COUPLE OF
GOOD WHALERS, FELLERS? AND I
MEAN WHALERS, NOT SOME OF
THE DOCK-RATS WHO CALL
THEMSELVES SEAMEN !



SO I THREE
YEARS I'VE WAITED TO
MEET UP WITH YOU
AGAIN, HARDY !

I'VE BEEN
LOOKING FOR YOU,
TOO, VEGAS ! WE HAVE
AN OLD SCORE TO
SETTLE, EH ?





NEXT MOMENT, FRENCHIE WAS ALSO FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE. THE BATTLE WAS JUST WARMING UP WHEN CAPTAIN CHUBNIK ENTERED THE SALOON ...



THE ORDER WENT UNHEEDED. THE RUSSIAN CAPTAIN GRABBED A RIFLE AND PULLED THE TRIGGER ...



THERE WAS A SPARK OF INTEREST
IN THE RUSSIAN'S COLD GREY EYES...

SEAMEN, EH? WHAT
ARE YOU DOING IN A PLACE
LIKE SAN FELINO?

WE GOT BEACHED HERE ABOUT A
MONTH AGO. OUR SHIP PUT IN FOR
SUPPLIES. WE MISSED THE SAILING
AND HAVE BEEN HERE EVER SINCE.

FRENCHIE AND ME, WE'RE
REALLY WHALERS...

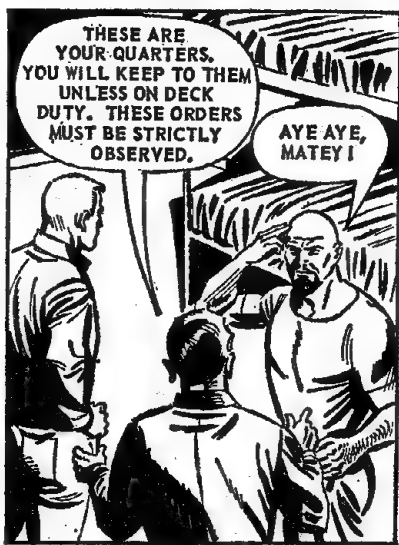
I AM CAPTAIN CHUBNIK. WE ARE
CONDUCTING A SURVEY ON KILLER
WHALES FOR THE RUSSIAN MARINE
BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT. MEN WITH
KNOWLEDGE OF THESE CREATURES
COULD BE MOST USEFUL TO US!

CHUBNIK ACCEPTED MIKE'S STORY AND VEGAS RELUCTANTLY CONFIRMED THAT
THEY WERE EXPERIENCED WHALERS. THEY WERE TAKEN ON...

I HOPE THIS
CAPTAIN DOES NOT
EXPECT US TO JUMP
TO ATTENTION.

THESE BOYS MUST BE FROM
THE RUSSIAN NAVY. THEY
HANDLE THOSE RIFLES TOO
WELL FOR ORDINARY SEAMEN.

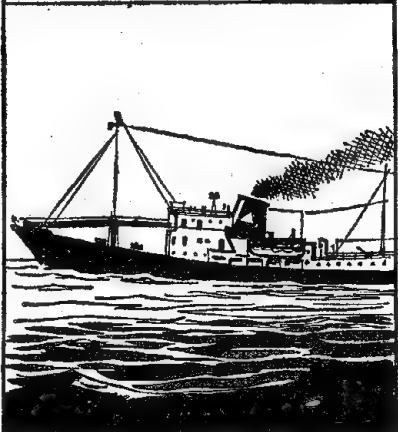
THE 'PETROV' WAS NO ORDINARY SHIP, EITHER.



MIKE DECIDED TO HIDE THE ELECTRONIC DEVICE GIVEN HIM BY THE AMERICANS. IT WAS TOO DELICATE TO BE CARRIED AROUND...



FOR LONG HOT DAYS, THE 'PETROV' PLOUGHED ACROSS THE VAST PACIFIC. THEIR COURSE WAS ERRATIC, THEIR PURPOSE SEEMINGLY AIMLESS.



THEN, ONE DAY, THE HOLIDAY WAS SUDDENLY OVER...



EVEN BEFORE HE REACHED THE BRIDGE, MIKE GUESSED THE RUSSIANS HAD MADE CONTACT WITH THEIR QUARRY...

AH, HARDY. WE HAVE SOMETHING ON RADAR WHICH WE BELIEVE TO BE A GROUP OF KILLER WHALES. IS IT TRUE THAT THEY ALWAYS HUNT IN PACKS?

THAT'S
RIGHT. LIKE
WOLVES, BUT A LOT
MEANER!

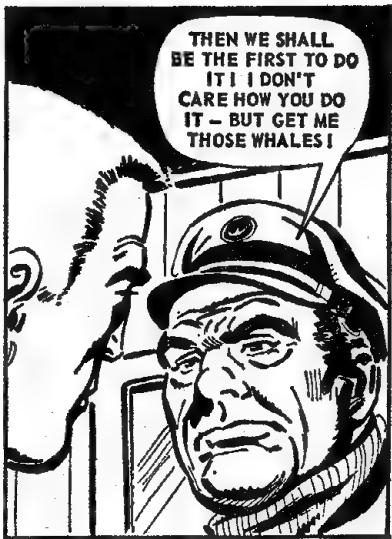


THERE THEY ARE - EIGHT OF THEM! I WANT ONE OF THOSE CREATURES, HARDY - I DON'T KNOW WHICH ONE. WE MAY HAVE TO TAKE THEM ALL TO FIND IT.

IT'LL BE
TOUGH ENOUGH
GETTING ONE,
LET ALONE
EIGHT!



THEN WE SHALL
BE THE FIRST TO DO
IT! I DON'T
CARE HOW YOU DO
IT - BUT GET ME
THOSE WHALES!



IT WAS TIME TO LET THE AMERICANS KNOW. MIKE WAS ANXIOUS TO ACTIVATE THE SMALL HOMING DEVICE.

I'LL JUST GO
TO MY CABIN, TO TELL
MY MATE.

MY FIRST OFFICER
WILL SEE YOUR FRIEND
JOINS YOU. BETTER
GO NOW - WE ARE
CLOSING FAST!



THESE
WHALES, MISTER
HARDY - IS IT
TRUE THEY
SOMETIMES
ATTACK SMALL
BOATS?

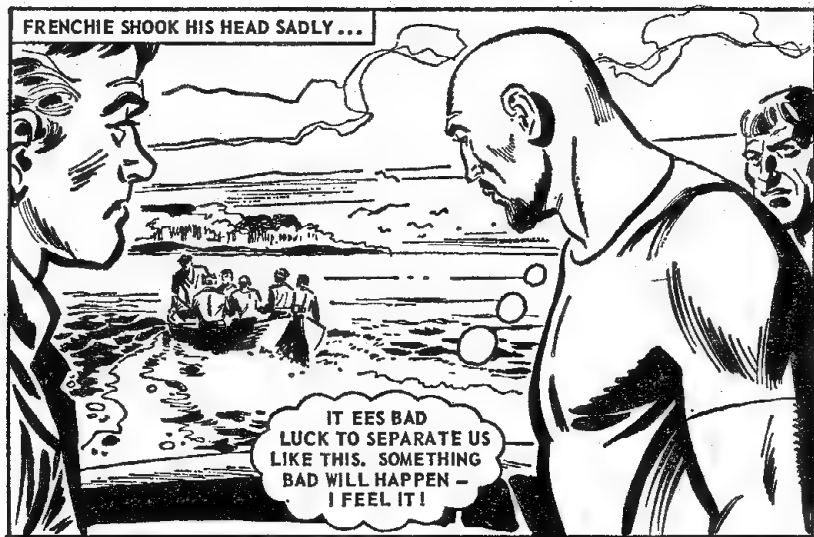
NO TELLING
WHAT THEY'LL
DO WHEN
RILED!



FRENCHIE REACHED THE TOP DECK TOO LATE TO JOIN MIKE IN THE BOAT...



FRENCHIE SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY...



THE RUSSIAN SHIP'S FIRST OFFICER WAS IN CHARGE OF THE BOAT...



THESE MEN ARE EXPERT SHOTS. IF YOU GET THE HARPOON INTO THE WHALE, THEY WILL FINISH HIM!

AN ELEPHANT GUN COULDN'T STOP ONE OF THOSE BABIES IF IT WAS ON THE MOVE!



CUT THE ENGINE - NOBODY SPEAK! I WANT TO HEAR THEM. HA, THEY'RE RIGHT BELOW US...





IT WAS A FEW FATAL MOMENTS BEFORE THE BOAT GOT UNDER WAY...



BITTER EXPERIENCE HAD TAUGHT MIKE THE DANGER OF HESITANCY. HE HAD FLUNG HIMSELF CLEAR BEFORE THE WHALE'S HUGE TAIL CRASHED DOWN ON THE BOAT...



THE KILLER WHALE WAS NOW LIVING UP TO HIS NAME. MIKE GRABBED THE FIRST OFFICER AND BEGAN TO STRIKE OUT FOR THE SHIP...



ONLY THREE OF THEM ESCAPED - TO FACE THE ANGER OF CAPTAIN CHUBNIK...



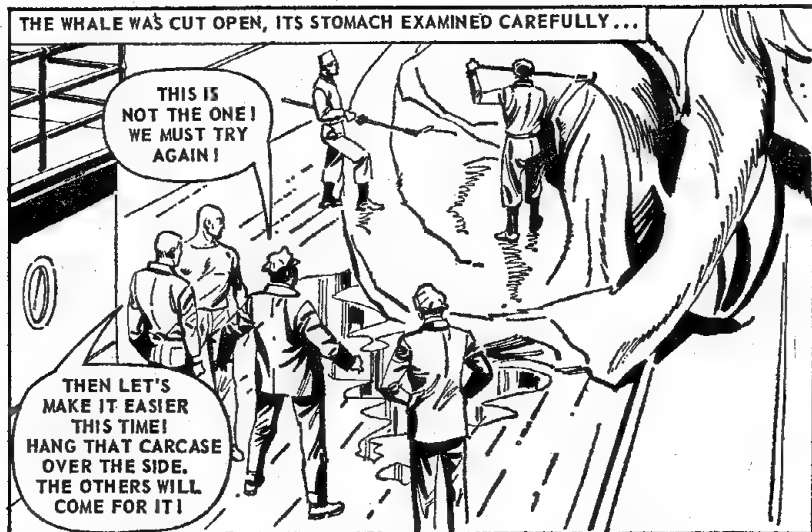
MEANWHILE, MIKE HAD LASHED A LINE HE WAS CARRYING TO THE RAIL...



THE FIRST OFFICER WAS SLOWLY RECOVERING...



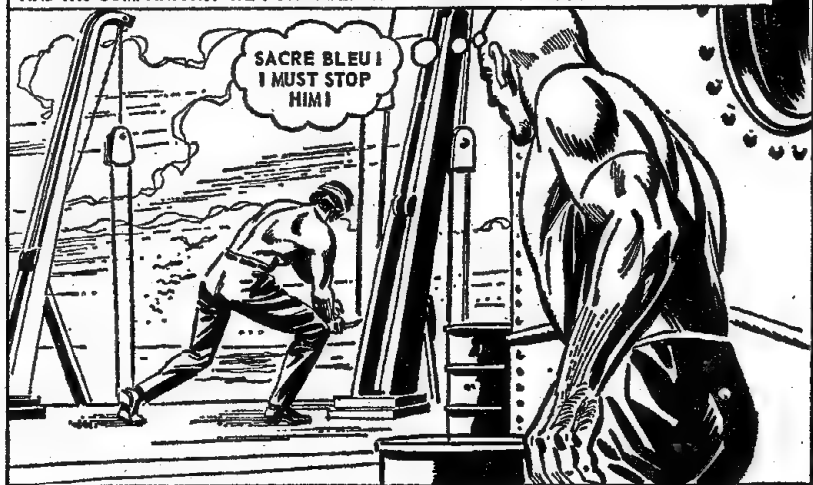
THE WHALE WAS CUT OPEN, ITS STOMACH EXAMINED CAREFULLY...



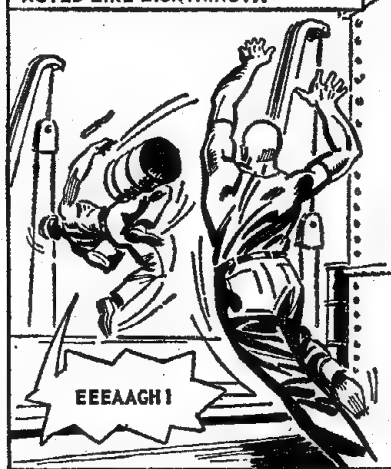
MIKE'S IDEA OF WHAT WAS EASY MADE EVEN THE TOUGH RUSSIANS SHIVER. BUT FOR VEGAS, IT OFFERED A CHANCE OF PAYING BACK OLD SCORES.



BUT FRENCHIE HAD ELECTED HIMSELF WATCHDOG OVER THE ACTIONS OF VEGAS AND HIS COMPANIONS. HE FOLLOWED THE MAN TO THE UPPER BOAT DECK...



ONE SLASH OF THE KNIFE AND MIKE WOULD BE DOOMED. FRENCHIE ACTED LIKE LIGHTNING...



AT THAT SAME INSTANT, MIKE STRUCK HOME WITH THE HARPOON...



WITHIN SECONDS, THE SECOND WHALE HAD BEEN WINCHED CLEAR AND FINISHED OFF.

THAT MAN WHO FELL OVERBOARD - ANYONE SEE HOW IT HAPPENED?

HE MUST HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET A BETTER VIEW FROM THE BOAT DECK - AND SLIPPED!

CHUBNIK DISMISSED THE INCIDENT. ANOTHER DEATH WAS NOTHING TO HIM. ONLY THE SUCCESS OF HIS MISSION WAS IMPORTANT.

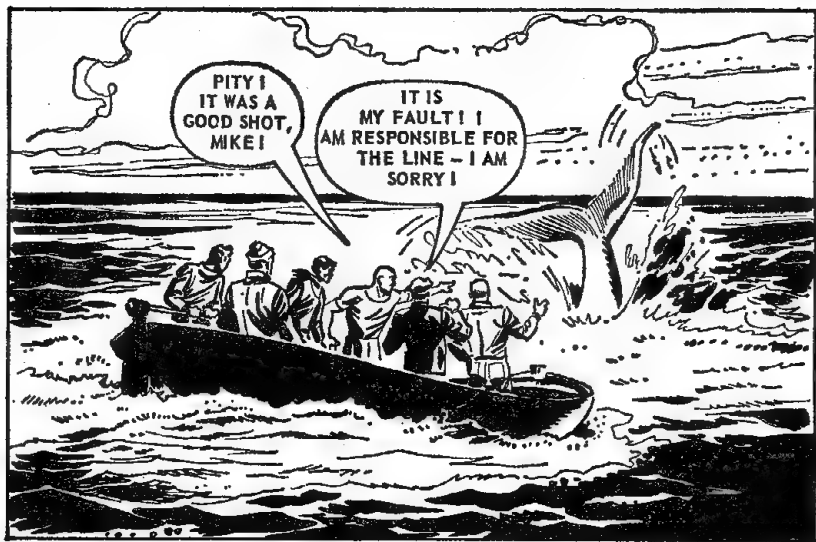
NOTHING, CAPTAIN!

BAH! I THROW THAT CARCASE INTO THE SEA. GIVE THE OTHERS SOMETHING TO KEEP THEM FROM WANDERING OFF AGAIN. PREPARE ANOTHER BOAT!

AS THE SECOND BOAT WAS LAUNCHED, MIKE HAD OTHER PROBLEMS THAN THE KILLER WHALES ON HIS MIND...

I STILL HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO REACH THAT HOMING DEVICE AND SIGNAL THE AMERICANS. HAVE TO DO SOMETHING SOON BEFORE WE'RE ALL KILLED OFF!

A HUGE KILLER WHALE SLID PAST - A FEW FEET FROM THE BOAT...



FROM THE SHIP, CAPTAIN CHUBNIK ALSO OBSERVED WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

THAT INCOMPETENT FOOL! I'LL HAVE HIM BROKEN FOR THIS - WHAT DO YOU WANT, VEGAS? YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED ON THE BRIDGE!



FOUND SOMETHING IN HARDY'S CABIN, CAPTAIN! I THOUGHT I'D BETTER SHOW YOU...

CHUBNIK SHREWDLY PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER...

SO! IT WOULD SEEM MISTER HARDY IS A SPY! COME, VEGAS, LET US GO TO MEET HIM AND HIS FRIEND...



MIKE AND FRENCHIE WERE JUST CLIMBING ABOARD...

AN UNFORTUNATE SLIP! OUR RADAR SHOWS ONLY ONE WHALE NEARBY - IT MUST BE THE ONE YOU KILLED. IF YOU COULD GET A LINE ATTACHED TO HIM, HARDY, I WILL PAY YOU A DOUBLE BONUS!



ALL RIGHT. BUT JUST IN CASE ANY OF THE OTHERS COME BACK, I WANT SOME MEN WITH ME. VEGAS IS GOOD AT THAT SORT OF THING. I'D FEEL BETTER WITH HIM DOWN THERE.

AGREED.
TAKE TWO OTHERS,
VEGAS -
AND HARPOON
GUNS!

THE SHIP'S FIRST OFFICER HAD LISTENED WITH A FROWN...

BE CAREFUL, MISTER
HARDY! CHUBNIK IS MOST DANGEROUS
WHEN HE IS FRIENDLY!

I DON'T
LIKE THE IDEA
OF VEGAS BEING
DOWN THERE WITH
YOU EITHER, MIKE.
I AM COMING,
TOO!

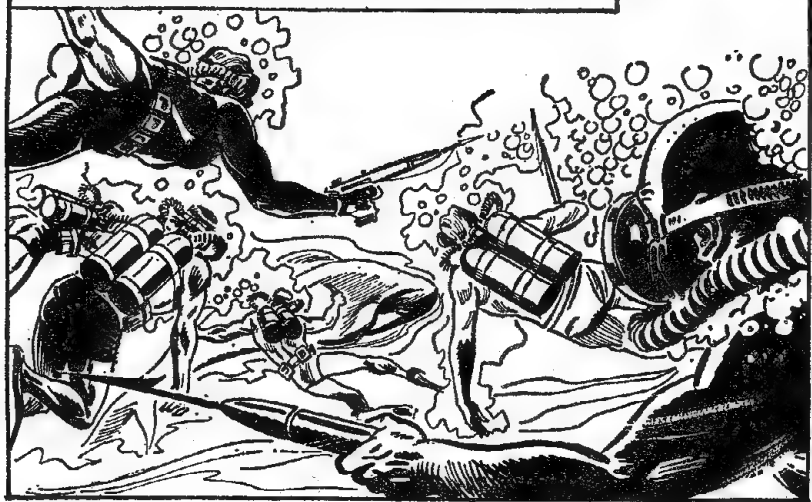
FIVE OF THEM DONNED FROGMAN GEAR AND CHUBNIK HIMSELF DECIDED TO LEAD THE BOAT CREW.

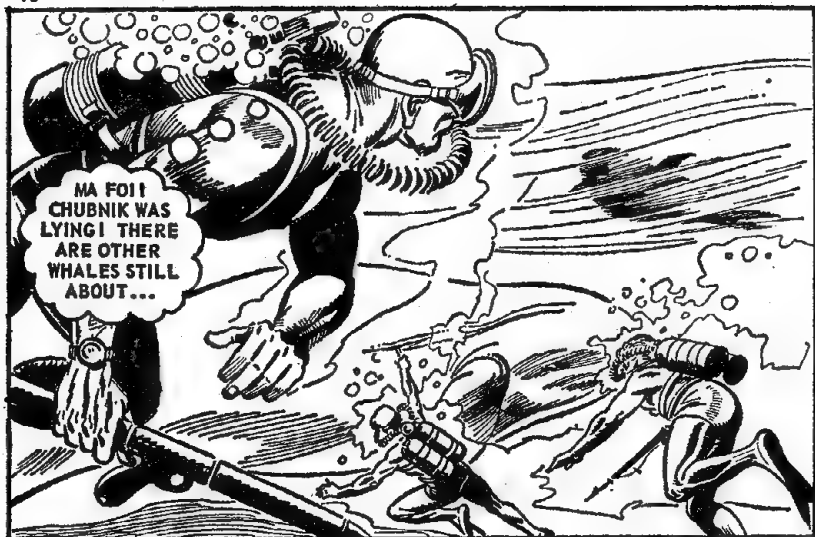
I THEENK
WE MUST WATCH
VEGAS AS MUCH AS
THE WHALES,
MON AMI!

IT'S MY GUESS THAT
THE INSTRUMENT BOX
IS IN THIS WHALE WE'RE
AFTER - THEY SEEM
MIGHTY INTERESTED
IN IT!



THE DEAD WHALE WAS FLOATING DEEP BELOW THE SURFACE...

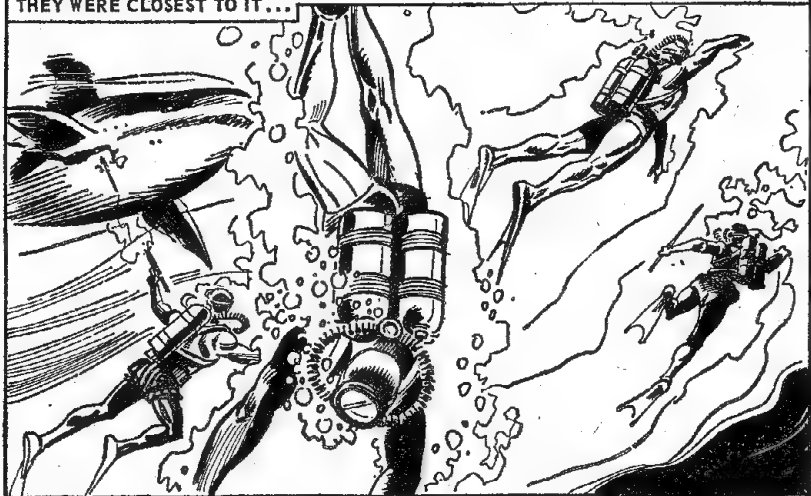




THE GIANT CREATURE OFFERED THE QUICK-WITTED FRENCHIE THE CHANCE OF DISTRACTING VEGAS AND THE TWO OTHER MEN FROM MIKE'S ACTIVITIES, SO HE FIRED HIS HARPOON GUN AT IT...



THE WOUNDED WHALE SPUN ABOUT AND SPOTTED VEGAS AND HIS COMPANIONS FOR THEY WERE CLOSEST TO IT...



FRENCHIE DIVED DEEP BUT THE OTHERS KICKED FRANTICALLY TOWARDS THE SURFACE. ONE OF THEM WAS NOT FAST ENOUGH...



MEANWHILE, MIKE HARDY WAS SLASHING EXPERTLY AT THE CARCASS OF THE DEAD KILLER WHALE...



MIKE AND FRENCHIE KICKED FOR THE SURFACE...

WE CAN'T GO BACK TO THE SHIP!
MAKE FOR THE ISLAND, FRENCHIE --
UNDERWATER! CHUBNIK MAY THINK
THE WHALES GOT US!



IT WAS A SLIM CHANCE, BUT IT MIGHT WORK.



SOON, THEY WERE WADING OUT OF THE SHALLOWS — JUST IN TIME!

SORRY, CHUMS —
GO FIND SOMETHING
ELSE TO EAT!



WE MADE IT, OLD
FRIEND!

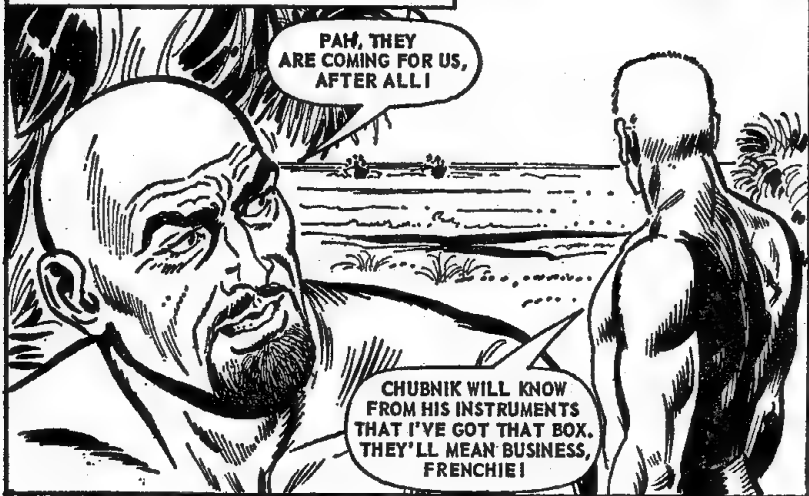
I AM FEENISHED.
NO MORE HUNTING WHALES
FOR ME. FROM NOW ON
I CATCH ONLY LEEITLE
FISH!



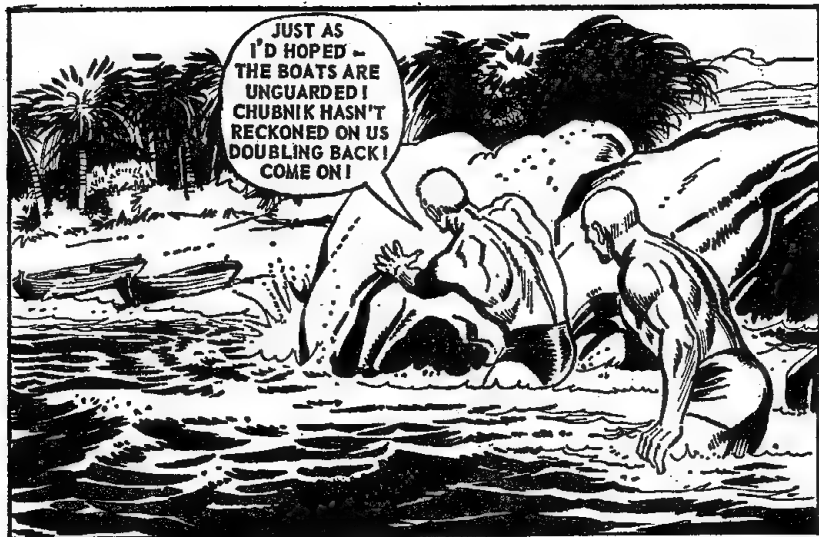
BUT CHUBNIK AND HIS MEN HAD SEEN THEM...

PAH, THEY
ARE COMING FOR US,
AFTER ALL!

CHUBNIK WILL KNOW
FROM HIS INSTRUMENTS
THAT I'VE GOT THAT BOX.
THEY'LL MEAN BUSINESS,
FRENCHIE!







THEY MADE A DASH ACROSS THE SAND - AND THEN...

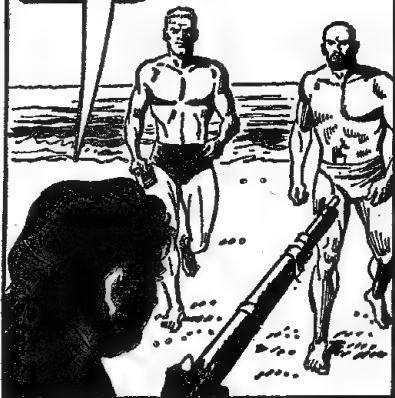


THERE WAS MURDEROUS HATRED IN THE EYES OF VEGAS...

LISTEN, VEGAS - THIS IS FROM AN AMERICAN SPACE CAPSULE. IT'S WHAT CHUBNIK IS AFTER! ONCE HE GETS IT, HE'LL KILL YOU AS WELL AS US!



NICE OF YOU TO PUT ME IN THE PICTURE. WHEN I'VE DISPOSED OF YOU TWO, I'LL TAKE THE BOX - AND IF THE RUSSIANS DON'T MEET MY TERMS, I'LL SELL IT BACK TO THE AMERICANS!



AT THAT MOMENT, FRENCHIE LEAPED LIKE A PANTHER - BUT VEGAS WAS JUST AS QUICK...

NOW, MIKE -
AAGH!



THE FRENCHMAN WENT DOWN WITH A BULLET IN HIS LEG - BUT MIKE HIT VEGAS LIKE A BATTERING RAM.



A PILE-DRIVING RIGHT SWING AND VEGAS LOST INTEREST ALTOGETHER.



MIKE TURNED ANXIOUSLY TO HIS FRIEND...

THOSE SHOTS WILL BRING CHUBNIK BACK. HERE, I'LL HELP YOU INTO THE BOAT.

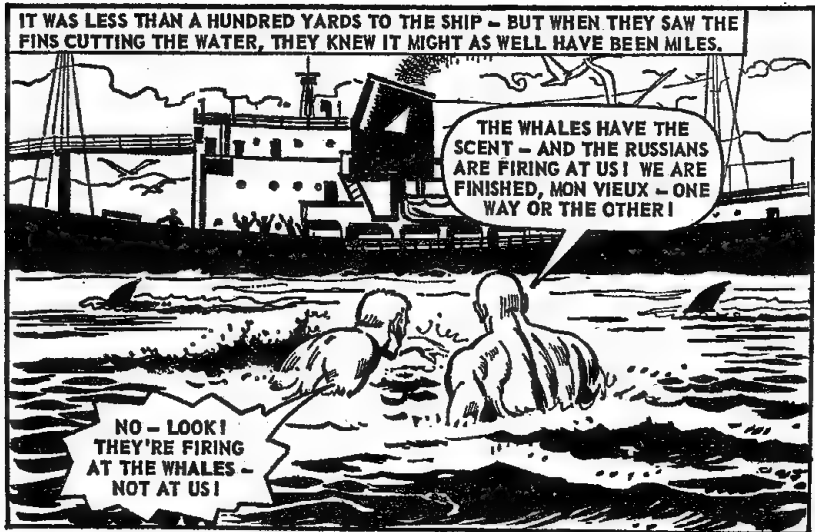
NON, MON AMI - NOT THE BOAT! THEY WILL PICK US OFF EASILY! WE MUST SWIM OUT.



MIKE HESITATED - BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT ...



IT WAS LESS THAN A HUNDRED YARDS TO THE SHIP - BUT WHEN THEY SAW THE FINS CUTTING THE WATER, THEY KNEW IT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN MILES.



ACCURATE SHOTS PICKED OFF THE KILLER WHALES NEAREST TO THE SWIMMERS, WHO HASTILY SWAM ON TO THE SHIP'S SIDE...

QUICKLY -
GET THEM
ABOARD!

PANTING AND AT THEIR LAST GASP, MIKE AND FRENCHIE SPRAWLED ON THE DECK AT THE FEET OF THE YOUNG RUSSIAN FIRST OFFICER...

OKAY,
YOU WIN!

WE BOTH
WIN, I HOPE,
MISTER HARDY.
WE HAVE HAD
ENOUGH OF
CHUBNIK'S CRUELTY.
IF WE TAKE YOU TO
THE AMERICANS,
YOU HELP US TO
GET POLITICAL
ASYLUM -
YES?

IT WAS LIKE A LAST-MINUTE REPRIEVE FROM A SENTENCE OF DEATH...

TOO MANY
MEN HAVE DIED
FOR THIS LITTLE
BOX! I JUST HOPE
IT WILL NEVER BE
USED FOR ANYTHING
BUT PEACEFUL
PURPOSES...



DOUBLE-CROSS

THE SOUND OF METAL ON STONE ECHOED THROUGH THE HOLLOW BASEMENT...



SAM SWUNG THE PICK-AXE ONCE MORE AND THE SHARP POINT BROKE THROUGH. QUICKLY, THEY ENLARGED THE HOLE...



SAM CLAMBERED THROUGH THE HOLE AND JOHNNY TURNED TO BRING THE CASES AND EQUIPMENT...



JOHNNY'S THOUGHTS WENT BACK A FEW DAYS TO WHEN HE HAD SET UP THIS JOB ...

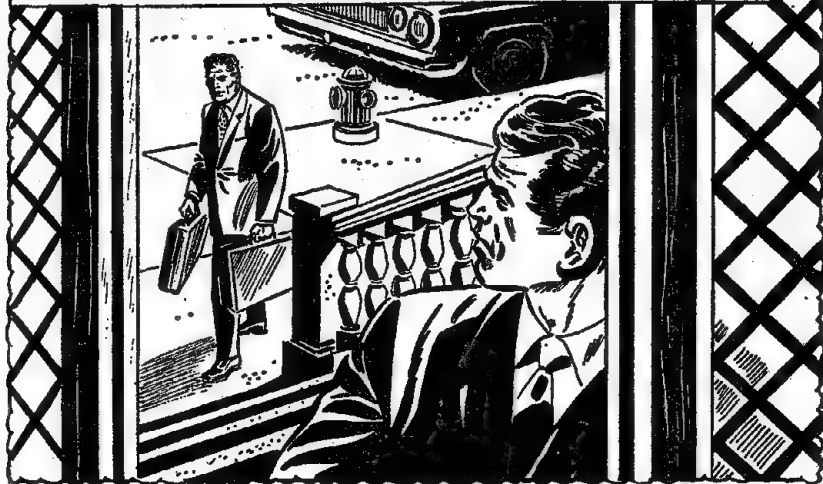


SAM PRODUCED A METAL BOX. TO JOHNNY THE DIALS AND SWITCHES MEANT NOTHING, BUT SAM WAS AN ELECTRONICS WIZARD...





THEY HAD GONE TO THE BANK ON A SATURDAY NIGHT AS THEY NEEDED AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE BEFORE THE BANK OPENED ON MONDAY MORNING....



THEN HAD COME THE HARD WORK OF BREAKING THROUGH THE ADJOINING WALL.
BUT NOW THEIR GOAL WAS IN SIGHT...

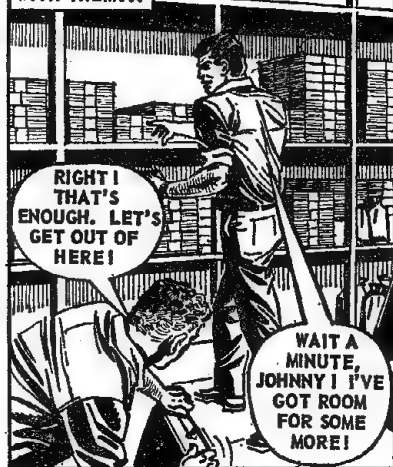


AS IF CONTROLLED BY SOME UNSEEN HAND, THE VAULT DOOR SUDDENLY
CLICKED AND SWUNG OPEN...

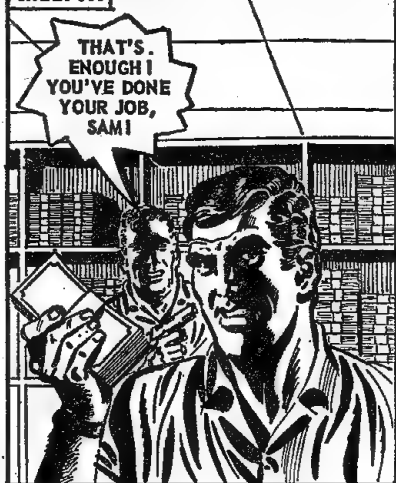




FEVERISHLY, THE TWO MEN FILLED THE CASES THEY HAD BROUGHT WITH THEM...



SAM REACHED OUT TO ANOTHER SHELF...





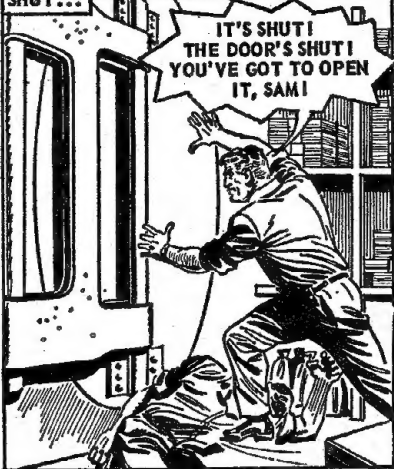
FOR A SPLIT SECOND, JOHNNY WAS CAUGHT OFF BALANCE. THEN HIS AUTOMATIC FIRED WITH A DEAFENING CRASH...



THE SLUG THREW SAM ACROSS THE VAULT AGAINST THE HUGE STEEL DOOR...



JOHNNY FLUNG HIMSELF FORWARD - BUT THE DOOR CLICKED SOLIDLY SHUT...



BUT SAM HAD OPENED HIS LAST SAFE...



HE LOOKED AT HIS WATCH. THERE WERE 28 HOURS TO WAIT BEFORE THE BANK STAFF ARRIVED ON MONDAY MORNING...



JOHNNY HAD FOUND HIS FORTUNE. BUT HE WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO SPEND IT NOW...



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